

By: Crockett

H.B. No. 4081

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to allowing the option of remote conduct in court proceedings.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. REMOTE CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS. (a) In this section, "remote proceeding" means a proceeding in which one or more of the participants, including a judge, party, attorney, witness, court reporter, juror, or other individual, attends the proceeding remotely through the use of technology and the Internet, including through teleconferencing or videoconferencing.

(b) A court shall:

(1) allow anyone involved in any hearing, deposition, or other proceeding of any kind including-but not limited-to a party, attorney, witness, or court reporter to participate by remote proceeding without the consent of the parties unless the United States or Texas Constitution requires consent.

(c) The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall provide guidance and assistance to the extent possible to a court conducting a remote proceeding involving a jury.

(d) The judge shall submit to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System a plan for conducting remote proceedings under this title. The plan must:

(1) include protocols for handling physical evidence;  
and

1           (2) require an unobstructed view of any party or  
2 witness who provides testimony from a remote location.

3           SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.